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SCIENCE

FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 1910

SOME REFLECTIONS UPON BOTANICAL
EDUCATION IN AMERICA¹

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IN the address with which he welcomed the American Association for the Advancement of Science to Columbia University three years ago, President Butler centered his remarks on a matter of the first scientific and educational importance. He said, in effect, that for a quarter century he had been a close and friendly observer of the progress of the sciences in education, that during this time he had seen them win almost complete recognition and opportunity, but that he was obliged to confess to some disappointment at the results. He was not referring to the sciences in technical education, for in this field their status is satisfactory, but to their position in general or cultural education. He did not presume, he said, to suggest either an explanation or a remedy, but he submitted the matter to the consideration of his expert audience. These words of this eminent educational observer touched an answering chord in my own thoughts, and since that time I have found, by inquiry among my colleagues, that he voiced a feeling quite general among scientific men themselves. It seems, therefore, to be a fact that the sciences, although dealing in knowledge of matters of the greatest immediate interest, and although concerned with the most elemental of all trainings—that in the correlated use of hand, eye and mind—are still of mediocre efficiency as factors in general education. I propose now to discuss briefly the reasons I have been able to find for this

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¹ Address of the retiring president of the Botanical Society of America, delivered at Boston, December 28, 1909.